



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.7946 | FAX (517) 373.2678
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/stamas/

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Contact: Chad Wing
517-373-7946

Senate Republicans unveil package supporting state parks

LANSING – Michigan’s state parks would receive more funding and special recognition would be given to parks and volunteers under legislation being introduced today in the Senate, Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, announced.

The legislation, which would create an awards program recognizing a state park of the year, state park volunteer of the year and state park worker of the year, is part of the Senate Republican’s State Parks Initiative. Another bill in the package would implement an income tax return check-off for donations to the state park system. The package also would create a State Parks Advisory Committee.

“Michigan’s state parks are wonderful and we want to recognize the hard work that goes into making the parks enticing for visitors,” said Stamas, one of the sponsors. “Creating these awards and the income tax check-off will allow us to keep our parks in top condition and attract more people to get involved in the effort.”

The State Parks Advisory Committee would be in charge of helping to guide the park system. They also would be in charge of selecting the State Park Gem of the Year award and Volunteer of the Year award recipients each year. The committee will be appointed by the director of Department of Natural Resources with the advice and consent of the Natural Resources Commission.

Other bill sponsors include Sens. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, and Patricia Birkholz, R-Saugatuck. The bills now go to the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee for consideration.

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Editor’s note: Audio clips of Senator Stamas are available on the Internet at
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/>.

Editor’s note: A photo of Sen. Stamas and colleagues introducing the State Parks Initiative is available for download on the Senate Majority Photowire at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Stamas/Stamas.htm>